

A router USB media server allows you to connect a USB storage device to your router and share its contents (like music, videos, and photos) with other devices on your local network. This effectively turns your router into a basic network-attached storage (NAS) device, allowing you to stream media to devices like smart TVs, game consoles, or other computers.

Here's how it generally works:

- **1. Connect the USB drive:**

Plug your USB storage device (hard drive or flash drive) into the USB port on your router.

- **2. Enable the media server:**

Access your router's settings (usually through a web browser and the router's IP address) and navigate to the USB or media server settings.

- **3. Enable the media server feature:**

Turn on the media server functionality (often using UPnP or DLNA protocols).

- **4. Configure sharing:**

Specify which folders on the USB drive you want to share.

- **5. Access media:**

On compatible devices (like those with Windows Media Player, or a smart TV with a media player app), you should be able to browse and play the media files stored on the USB drive.

Benefits:

- **Centralized storage:** You can access your media files from multiple devices on your network without needing to connect the storage device directly to each device.

- **Cost-effective:** Utilizes your existing router, potentially saving you the cost of a dedicated NAS device.

- **Convenience:** Makes it easy to share and access media files within your home network.

Limitations:

- **Performance:**

Router-based media servers often have limited processing power, which can impact performance, especially with large or high-resolution media files.

- **Features:**

Compared to dedicated NAS devices, router media servers may lack advanced features like transcoding or robust media management.

- **File format support:**

Some routers may have limited support for certain file formats.

- **Security:**

Ensure you understand your router's security settings when sharing files over the network.

Alternatives:

- **Dedicated NAS:**

For more robust media server functionality, consider a dedicated NAS (Network Attached Storage) device from companies like Synology or QNAP, which are designed for media storage and streaming.

- **Plex Media Server:**

Plex is a popular software that can turn your computer or NAS into a powerful media server with features like transcoding, remote access, and user management.

- **External hard drive with media server software:**

You can also connect an external hard drive to your computer and use software like Plex or Kodi to create a media server.

Resources (How to)

<https://www.seeedstudio.com/blog/2023/05/30/from-router-to-storage-hub-how-a-nas-transforms-your-home-business-network/>

[https://youtu.be/6A\\_I48bGCbl?si=AsDTbf4muzXYO6Mh](https://youtu.be/6A_I48bGCbl?si=AsDTbf4muzXYO6Mh)

<https://www.tp-link.com/nordic/support/faq/639/>

